

2021.10.23 Stupidity Theory Revisited

[The first part of this was published on Oct. 23, 2018 at OpEdNews.com¹ and is the best I can do as far as understanding Noam Chomsky is concerned.]

In a recent article² David Griffin asks how Chris Hayes and Rachel Maddow, "a Rhodes scholar, who earned a Ph.D. at Oxford," could "have both written such poor essays about 9/11." Then he says:

In addition, there may be another fact: I was recently told by a man (whose name I cannot reveal) that we Truthers should not waste time trying to convince journalists: They know that 9/11 was an inside job and would have liked to report this fact, but the owners of the media forbid them from doing so.

In one of her comments on the article, Griffin's colleague Elizabeth Woodworth wrote:

Having watched the almost entirely consistent MSM news about 9/11 for more than 10 years, I have come to a logical conclusion.

The news people are not stupid. Many of them spontaneously observed the morning of 9/11 that the buildings looked like controlled demolition.

But then all that changed. And this has been no accident.

I have come to suspect that the news networks, and also influential people like Noam Chomsky, were visited by senior members of the intelligence agencies saying that to cast doubt on the official story of 9/11 would be a massive threat to national security. The networks and people such as Chomsky may even have been threatened with treason or something akin to it.

Whatever they did has worked very well.

Woodworth hits the nail on the head. I have been struggling with Noam Chomsky's views, first on JFK, then on 9/11, since 1989. I corresponded with him over the course of almost six years (1989-95) about whether or not JFK had decided to pull out of Vietnam. I think I clearly won the argument, but you can judge for yourself as I have documented the correspondence in detail here. Subsequent evidence, such as Robert McNamara's memoir,³ has confirmed my opinion, though Chomsky still disagrees.⁴ Although Chomsky thanked me at the time for (indirectly) helping him get his thoughts together for the book he later published as *Rethinking Camelot* (1993), my arguments obviously made no dent in his thinking since they did not even merit a footnote.

This experience left me, it seemed, with two possible conclusions: either I was smarter than I thought, or Chomsky was dumber than I thought. Neither has held up over time, although the

¹ https://www.opednews.com/articles/Stupidity-Theory-Revisited-by-Michael-Morrissey-Chris-Hayes_Conspiracy_David-Ray-Griffin_Intelligence-181023-117.html

² https://www.opednews.com/articles/Fake-News-9-11-and-MSNBC-by-David-Ray-Griffin-911_Chris-Hayes_Rachel-Maddow-181020-903.html

³ *In Retrospect*, Vintage Books, 1996.

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50MqHnoDEts>

second possibility, after hearing his remarks on 9/11⁵ (just google "Chomsky 9/11"), seemed even more likely. Why would a man as smart as Chomsky say such stupid things? Denial, ignorance and/or stupidity just do not satisfy in Chomsky's case. Is his career at stake, as one might suspect of a working journalist like Maddow or Hayes? Hardly. He will be 90 in December. Is he concerned about his reputation, his "legacy"? Afraid that he will lose credibility and honor by aligning himself with "conspiracy theorists"? Possibly, but this is a man who has argued many an unpopular position, a man who is not afraid to call the US "the world's leading terrorist state"⁶ and to argue cogently and consistently over many decades to support this view. This makes him very different from someone like Maddow or Hayes.

Why, then, does he appear to be as stupid as they are about 9/11? We should bear in mind that although Chomsky makes a lot of the distinction between "conspiracy theory" and "institutional analysis,"⁷ this is a false dichotomy. One could easily say that these events were "merely" ineluctable consequences of "the system." "Institutional" analysis does not preclude conspiracies. A conspiracy is by definition anything bad planned secretly by more than one person, which can include wars, "state terror," and all forms of oppression. Since all governments at least sometimes do these things, to that extent they could all be considered "conspiratorial."

What this false dichotomy really does is move the analysis to a level of abstraction where all the actors are seen as caught up in systemic or institutional processes in which their individual actions are relatively unimportant. This defangs the entire analysis on an emotional level, making it less volatile and less politically dangerous.

Why these two subjects, and as it would seem, only these? Because precisely the contrary of what Chomsky says about them is true: they are important, and what he says about them is also important. Just imagine the consequences of Noam Chomsky saying that 9/11 was an inside job. It wouldn't matter if this were part of an "institutional analysis" (which it easily could be) or not. The political effect of saying it either way would be the same.

I do not believe in what I have called Stupidity Theory.⁸ This is the theory according to which not only is Noam Chomsky too stupid to come to grips with the assassination of JFK and 9/11, but a succession of US governments were also too stupid to do so, just as they were too stupid to realize that the Vietnam war was a bad idea, too stupid to know that the Gulf of Tonkin "attack" never happened, too stupid to defend the country against 19 box-cutter-wielding Arabs, too stupid to find out if Saddam Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction," etc. -- and now, bringing us up to the present, too stupid to prevent the Russians from controlling US elections.

In opposition to Stupidity Theory I propose Anti-Stupidity, or Transparency Theory. This is a very simple theory, in fact only common sense: Some things are just too stupid to believe. This means that something else, something that would be obvious if it were not for the stupid explanations to the contrary, is true. In Chomsky's case it is his seemingly brainless acceptance of the official account of the assassination and 9/11.

Vincent Salandria applied this notion, brilliantly and precociously, in 1971 to the JFK assassination.⁹ It is from him that I have the term "transparency" to refer to 9/11 because

5

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_positions_of_Noam_Chomsky#Views_on_9/11_conspiracy_theories

⁶ <https://truthout.org/articles/the-leading-terrorist-state/>

⁷ <https://zcomm.org/zblogs/9-11-institutional-analysis-vs-conspiracy-theory-by-noam-chomsky/>

⁸ See *The Transparent Conspiracy*.

⁹ <https://ratical.org/ratville/JFK/FalseMystery/ModelOfExplanation.html>

what Salandria said about the JFK assassination can be said in spades about 9/11: "If you are tempted to want to believe that our leaders are just ignorant and capable of unremitting blundering, I urge that you abandon any such illusion."

I don't think Chomsky is the smartest man in the world, and I also know that I am not smarter than he is. But I cannot bring myself to believe that he is on the government payroll or a deep-cover agent of some kind, either. I think he really is brilliant, well informed, and well intentioned, so there is another possibility. Maybe he is trying to tell us something, in code. Maybe he hopes that by saying what is too stupid to believe, we will be smart enough not to believe it.